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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: POST-ELECTION CHALLENGES REMAIN

REF: A. DAKAR 994

¶B. DAKAR 945

Classified By: Classified By: CHARGE JAY T. SMITH FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) A
ND (D)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: In the days immediately before and after the second-round presidential election in Guinea-Bissau, PolCouns held a number of meetings to discuss the country's post-election future. President-elect Malam Bacai Sanha stressed the need for increased economic growth and development, arguing Guinea-Bissau's instabilities will continue without development. Sanha also argued that international assistance should be increased and better coordinated. Sanha identified the need to work with defeated presidential candidate Kumba Yala, who in a separate meeting with PolCouns espoused some of his many grievances, which must be dealt with for any political progress to occur. In meetings with members of the military, including acting deputy chief of defense staff Colonel Antonio Indjai, the need for military non-interference in politics was stressed. All parties agreed that Security Sector Reform (SSR) is urgently necessary in Guinea-Bissau. END SUMMARY.

PRESIDENT-ELECT SANHA'S PRIORITIES

¶12. (C) On July 25, PolCouns met Malam Bacai Sanha at his home in Bissau. Exhausted after a long electoral campaign, Sanha spoke about his priorities for Guinea-Bissau. He argued that his task is to give a tired populace hope and courage. He acknowledged Guinea-Bissau's current &grave situation8 and admitted that the country has been barely functioning since the 1998 civil war. In Sanha's opinion, the President must give the people hope, listen to them, and provide good governance. He stressed that the President has no right to govern for himself and that it will be necessary to involve all Bissau-Guineans in the process.

¶13. (C) While Sanha believes that SSR is important he understands that it will be difficult. However, he sees general public sector reform as a more important task for Guinea-Bissau. The key to this, he argued, is a functioning economy. The government needs to have enough money to pay its workers, which is necessary for services to function. In Sanha's opinion, only (increased) international aid can help Guinea-Bissau, in its current state, to pay salaries. In his opinion, what is needed for prosperity and stability in Guinea-Bissau is a & comprehensive project8 with the international community. Sanha emphasized that while Guinea-Bissau has recently and historically worked with donors on isolated projects such as the Chinese construction of a new ministerial complex or the European Union's SSR mission, there has been no comprehensive strategy. Sanha underscored the necessity of Guinea-Bissau having a leader who can lead these efforts and coordinate donors to increase aid effectiveness. Sanha

stressed that without development, Guinea-Bissau's problems will remain intractable.

DEALING WITH KUMBA YALA'S GRIEVANCES

¶4. (C) On July 24, PolCouns met Kumba Yala and his campaign manager, Baltazar Cardoso, in the town of Bula. According to Yala, the heads of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau (PAIGC) are irresponsible leaders who have not accomplished anything in their many years of rule in Guinea-Bissau and have stolen elections to keep themselves in power. As he sees it, the PAIGC controls everything and has stacked the deck against him. He claims that Portugal was responsible for the coup d'etat that removed him from power in 2003 and that the PAIGC is &in bed with8 the Portuguese. Additionally, he claims that the PAIGC stole the massive majority that they currently hold in the national legislature during the November 2008 legislative elections.

¶5. (C) Yala emphasized that in spite of this majority, his support and that of his party, the Party of Social Renewal (PRS), was instrumental in seeing Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior's candidate, Raimundo Perreira, elected as speaker of the national assembly. Additionally, his support was also instrumental in approving Gomes's national program. In Yala's view, he and the PRS were able to do this because Gomes is a &broken8 politician with no support in his own party and cannot effectively govern. Yala added that Gomes is a corrupt politician who only fell out of favor with former president Joao Bernardo &Nino8 Vieira

DAKAR 00001018 002 OF 003

because of a dispute over ill-gotten gains. In Yala's view, it is thanks to him that the situation in Guinea-Bissau has not been as bad as it could have been. He has managed to prevent conflict, he argued, because his is the &way of peace.⁸ (NOTE: While many of Yala's claims lack merit, he is correct in asserting that the PAIGC is fractured. END NOTE.)

¶6. (C) During his meeting with PolCouns, Sanha maintained that, as President, he will be open to dialogue with Kumba Yala. He expressed hope that he would be able to sit down with Kumba Yala and resolve their differences in a civilized, respectful manner. He stressed that Kumba Yala cannot be excluded from a new government and that to exclude him would be \neg smart.⁸ In Sanha's opinion, Yala is an influential figure who needs to be given &hope8 and a role in the new government. However, Sanha added, if his overtures are unsuccessful and Yala remains intransigent, he would appeal to other countries in the region, and especially ECOWAS, to assist with facilitation and arbitration.

CONTAINING YALA

¶7. (C) During his meeting with PolCouns, Yala said that he would never surreptitiously try to undermine or overthrow the newly elected government. Instead, he declared, &If I want to overthrow the government, I'll do it during the day,⁸ a point he claims to have made to the African Union (AU). He strongly implied that he wields so much power and influence within the military that nobody would be able to stop him if he chose to overthrow Sanha's government. However, in Sanha's view, Yala is not a major threat. According to Sanha, Yala does indeed want to use violent means to undermine the electoral and transition process, but does not have the means. Even within the army, Sanha stressed, Yala does not have the same degree of influence he used to. The army's senior leadership has changed and, Sanha added, the current leadership has said that it wants and needs to become a true republican army. Additionally,

Sanha noted, the military that Yala claims to have influence over is the same military that deposed him in 2003.

18. (C) In a brief meeting with PolCouns on July 25, Ministry of Defense Director for International Cooperation Colonel Malam Camara echoed Sanha's sentiments. He agreed that Yala will most likely try to disrupt the electoral and transition process, but that he does not have the support of key elements in the military, notably the Chief of Defense, Naval Captain Zamora Induta, and his deputy, Colonel Antonio Indjai. Camara claimed that Induta and Indjai are more united than they had been in the past and argued that it is in Indjai's interest to side with Induta. Camara added that in a recent military meeting, Induta stressed that the military should not interfere in politics; this sentiment was passed around the military leadership and down the military's ranks. In Camara's opinion, the military's senior leadership understands that any coup attempt will increase the likelihood of ECOWAS sending in an intervention force. Additionally, a coup attempt would abruptly bring any SSR assistance to an end. (COMMENT: In the past, Camara thought Guinea-Bissau's situation was dire and recommended the United States to maintain a hard line against the military leadership. His current assessment is a significant change of tone. Although he might not be privy to all of the pertinent information within the military, his new found optimism might indicate that Induta and Indjai are beginning to consolidate their control over the armed forces. END COMMENT.)

19. (C) On July 27, immediately after the election, PolCouns met with Colonel Antonio Indjai. Indjai expressed his appreciation for PolCouns's meeting request. PolCouns strongly urged Indjai to work to ensure that members of the armed forces remain in their barracks and do not interfere with the post-election and transition process. PolCouns noted a previous statement from members of the armed forces to the effect that politicians have sought in the past to manipulate and take advantage of the armed forces. PolCouns encouraged Indjai to resist these efforts from politicians. Indjai agreed, stressing that he and the armed forces are aware of their proper role and will not allow any politicians to manipulate them. In addition, Indjai affirmed that he will respect civilian authority concerning the legitimate, constitutional role of Guinea-Bissau's armed forces.

DAKAR 00001018 003 OF 003

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND PEACEKEEPING

110. (C) Yala's tenure as President was marked by the & Balanta8-ization of the military, in which the military became full of ethnic Balantas (Yala's ethnic group, who number approximately 30-35 percent of the population and now number over 80 percent of the military). During the conversation, Yala argued that attempting to remove large numbers Balantas in the military would cause problems. According to Yala, he is not against SSR per se, and he is in favor of proportional representation in the military, but he stressed that any changes must be done &carefully and slowly.⁸ He argued that the civilian government must gain the trust of the Balanta officers in the military and that they should not feel that SSR is a pretext to get rid of them. (COMMENT: Yala's concerns, while self-serving, are not without merit. SSR must be done carefully so that it does not alienate the Balanta officer corps and provoke their opposition. This will be difficult for Sanha, but as long as Yala does not actively oppose reform and impede the newly elected government, it is not impossible. END COMMENT.)

111. (C) In his meeting with PolCouns, Sanha briefly touched

on the topic of SSR. He pointed out that the military needs to become more professional, and that he will weed out independence fighters who don't have proper military training. However, he argued that many of the military's problems are due to Guinea-Bissau's poor development and nonexistent economy. He emphasized that soldiers stay in uniform because they have no other options or opportunities. In his opinion, the DDR8 (Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration) aspect of SSR is vital, especially the R8 portion of it. However, he and the military are aware of the need for SSR. Speaking to PolCouns, Colonel Indjai agreed that SSR is necessary for Guinea-Bissau's stability and should be undertaken quickly following the government transition.

¶13. (C) Sanha opined that a peacekeeping and stabilization force for the country would be needed only in an extreme situation and that Guinea-Bissau is not in an extreme situation. He added that without a local mandate, the military will interpret the force as an aggressive force, which could exacerbate the situation. Additionally, the Bissau-Guinean public will see the force as an occupation force. Sanha questioned the wisdom of such a course of action and, while he did not express any adamant opposition, he believes that any international force should only be used in an extreme situation. He added that he is an optimist8 and that he doesn't foresee the situation in Guinea-Bissau deteriorating to such an extreme extent.

¶14. (C) COMMENT: With the election of Sanha the international community needs to move quickly to strengthen the civilian government's authority over the armed forces while insisting that certain confidence-building measures be taken, such as vigorously investigating the March assassinations. END COMMENT.

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